

DATE ISSUED: January 3, 2001

REPORT NO. 01-002

ATTENTION: Honorable Mayor and City Council
Docket of

SUBJECT: Formation of Ad Hoc Committee to Identify Criteria for Selecting Parks
for Off-Leash Dog Use

REFERENCE: Land Use and Housing Committee Actions of September 20, 2000,
Item #3, "Leash-Free Park Policy Update"

SUMMARY

Issue - Shall City Council approve the proposed membership of an Ad Hoc Committee to identify criteria for selecting parks in Council Districts 1, 2, 5 and 6 for off-leash dog use?

Manager's Recommendation - Approve the membership described in this report.

Other Recommendations - None.

Fiscal Impact - None.

BACKGROUND

At the September 20, 2000 Land Use and Housing (LU&H) Committee public hearing about the process for designating additional off-leash areas for dogs in parks, there were requests during public testimony that a committee of knowledgeable professionals be formed in order to begin a new process for selecting off-leash areas for dogs in parks. The LU&H Committee directed the City Manager to form a committee of up to ten members for this purpose, with committee membership to be approved by the City Council. The committee will identify criteria for selecting off-leash areas in parks that have a high potential to be successful and well-received by the communities they serve. The committee members will also be asked to recommend policies and rules for off-leash areas that they believe, in combination with appropriate site selection, will help off-leash areas to be successful. The committee will give its recommendations to the Park and Recreation Department. Then, in compliance with LU&H Committee's direction of September 20, 2000, the Department will apply the criteria to parks in Council Districts 1, 2, 5 and 6 and recommend to the LU&H Committee, and subsequently to City Council, a combined total of six to ten off-leash areas in parks in these Council Districts.

Following is the recommended membership of the committee. It includes professionals in a variety of fields which are relevant to selection of sites for off-leash dog use. All of the proposed members have agreed to volunteer their time and expertise to serve on this ad hoc, short-duration

committee.

Proposed member: Robert A. Clark, Director of Community Services Department, City of Poway

Subject area: Parks in general, and the Poway Off-Leash Dog Park, in particular.

Role: Share information on: a) what works well, and less well, in the Poway Off-Leash Dog Park; and b) siting requirements and rules from the perspective of a park professional.

Proposed member: Keith Richter, Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and Diplomat of American College for Veterinary Internal Medicine

Subject area: Dog health.

Role: Share information on: a) potential health benefits and threats for dogs using off-leash dog parks; and b) site conditions or rules that could enhance dog health or reduce/eliminate potential health threats.

Proposed member: Patricia Pryor, Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and Clinical Animal Behaviorist

Subject area: Dog behavior.

Role: Share information on: a) how dogs can be expected to behave in off-leash areas; b) potential behavioral benefits and threats for dogs using off-leash dog parks; and c) site conditions or rules that could enhance dog behavior, or reduce/eliminate potential problem behavior.

Proposed member: Jim Wright, Regional Director, Central County Animal Shelter, County Department of Animal Control

Subject area: County Department of Animal Control.

Role: Share: a) experience with areas where dogs are legally allowed off-leash; and b) site conditions or rules that could help reduce or eliminate any problem behaviors that Animal Control has encountered with off-leash dogs in parks.

Proposed member: Chris Gonaver, Registered Environmental Health Specialist with the State of California, B.A. in Microbiology, M.A. in Public Health, former Chief of Community Services and Planning for the County Department of Environmental Health, and current Deputy Director of the Environmental Protection Division, Environmental Services Department, City of San Diego

Subject area: Water quality and zoonosis.

Role: Share information on: a) impacts of un-removed dog excrement on groundwater and urban runoff, and what steps can be taken to measure whether changing the use of an area from solely on-leash use, or from illegal off-leash use, to legal off-leash use would have any effect on water quality; b) potential health impacts to human users of off-leash areas; and c) site conditions or rules that could reduce or eliminate concerns about negative impacts to human health from off-leash areas.

Proposed member: Mark Webb, Senior Park Project Manager, Open Space Division, Department of Parks and Recreation, County of San Diego

Subject area: Open space and natural habitats.

Role: Share information on: a) the impacts of off-leash dogs on open space and natural habitats; and b) site conditions or rules that could reduce or eliminate any negative impacts.

Proposed member: John Eric Holloway, American Society of Landscape Architects

Subject area: Landscape architecture.

Role: Share information on topographical, landscaping, access and other design features that should be considered in selecting sites for off-leash areas.

ALTERNATIVE

Approve a different committee membership than that proposed.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia C. McLatchy
Park and Recreation Director

Approved: George I. Loveland
Senior Deputy City Manager

McLATCHY/TW